

Arts Based Therapy and Autism

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ABSTRACT

Arts Based therapy was conducted on autistic children at Paramount Rehabilitation Centre. The main purpose of the study was to find out whether Arts Based Therapy can improve levels of attention and Narrative Capability in children. Individual case study was conducted at the centre on 5 children aged 4-10 years. In therapeutic goal 1 (T.G) Levels of Attention: Distractibility/Restlessness; Initiating tasks and sustained attention were taken into consideration. While in T.G 2 Narrative Capability Development: Acquisition of language; Expression & meaningfulness and silence and Listening were taken into consideration. After being exposed to Arts Based Therapy, the students have shown a considerable improvement in initiating of tasks and appropriate silence and listening skills and also in Expression through Arts. Arts based has shown improvements in children in understanding and following instructions, responding by nodding for yes and “No”, asking for more, showing interest if they like an activity, have started using crayons and expressing freely on paper which initially was not there and also have seen changes in behaviour such as decrease in repetitive behaviour to some extent; and smiling in response, waving bye while going. Consistent and regular use of ABT for a longer duration will definitely show a measurable difference in levels of attention and Narrative Capability Development in autistic children. The scope of ABT can further be extended by combining with other interventions like Speech therapy, Occupational therapy, Remedial education and also extending it to other areas like trainings to teachers and parents in Arts Based forms. Thus, in this study we can conclude that Arts Based Therapy has shown improvements in Levels of Attention, Narrative Capability and Expressive Capability in autistic children.

2. Section 2: INTRODUCTION

2.1. Larger Problem

1 IN 89 children between the ages of two and nine years in India suffers from Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) based on 2011 census data, which means 2.2 million children in that age group in India are autistic.

ASD is an umbrella term for people living with developmental disorders that impairs communication-speaking, gestures and listening and makes them having limited interests and repetitive behaviour are some of the common symptoms

ASD is not only prevalent only in those who have a family history of autism but also 10-15% of them who have some history of behavioural problems in the family. Each autistic child is different and will respond in different ways to the interventions.

2.2. Literature Review of Creative Arts Based Therapies

Ref. Asian journal of Pharmaceutical & clinical research (vol. 8, issue 6,2015)

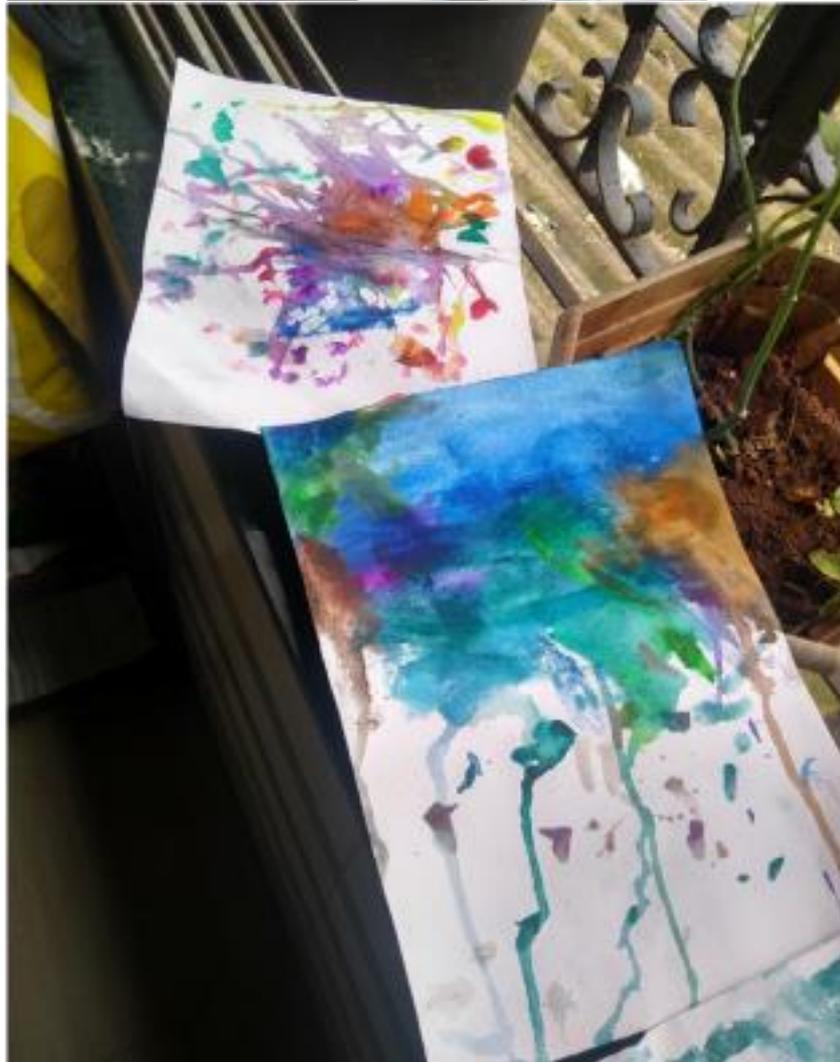
A human being has been endowed with speech whether verbal or non verbal to differentiate themselves from other species. Speech/ language can be in any form signs, words, paintings, music, enacting or any

other form for one to communicate and other to comprehend but with those with ASD it's a complex process as it is noted that their sensory inputs are atypical. Hence, making it difficult for them to communicate. But communicating through art or by using art as a medium provides an alternative route thus easing the process. It also helps enhance the process of non-verbal communication, body language, spatial orientation, attention and eye contact (though the changes are very subtle). (Evans&Dubowski). Arts based therapies are also complex interventions, that combine psychotherapeutic techniques with activities aimed at Arts with Autism

promoting creative expression. the creative process is used for self expression and the aesthetic form for patients' experience. It is to fill in the gap between verbal dialogue and developing an insight. The aim is to provide a differential experience and develop new ways of relating to others, (National collaborating centre for Mental Health,2009).Recent findings also show that Arts based therapies helps in development of abstract thinking skills, improvement of social skills and decreasing in problem behaviours(Theomke,212). A social skills program using Arts therapy for children with Autism revealed a significant improvement in their assertion, coupled with decreased internalizing behaviours, hyperactivity and problem behaviour (Epp,2008)

2.3. Hypothesis

Arts Based Therapy can improve the Narrative capability and attention span in autistic children.



Arts with Autism

3. Section 3: METHODS

Taking into consideration, each passenger of my journey, different sessions were planned so that everyone gets an opportunity to explore and experiment, their unique features were taken into account while planning. The sessions planned during the course of 4 months has been given in the table below. i.e from September to January, we encountered varied seasons and festivals too so the children were also given a taste of many of these during the sessions. It included collages, Mandala Art, clay sculpture, Christmas tree, snowman dancing to the rhythm of music and also not forgetting to exercise and keep oneself healthy. This exciting journey is incomplete without photos and videos. The journey has been highlighted through various videos and photographs. Out of which some have been included in the project here.

3.1. Eligibility Criteria

Out of all the 12 children with special needs 5 children who fall into the category of mild and moderate category of ASD were selected in the age criteria of 4-10 years, having similar family and socio-economic status and also who had been exposed to other interventions like speech, occupational therapy at least once a week.

3.2. Logistics

AGE	4-10 years
GENDER	Male
BACKGROUND	Lower middle class and middle class
OTHER RELEVANT INFO	

Arts with Autism

3.3. Data Sources & Data Collection Protocols • Attention: Using MARS (Moss Attention Rating Scale) for measuring attention (pre-post)

- Rating scale for children with Special Needs by World Centre for Creative Learning Foundation (WCCL)
- ABT tools: NcD (Narrative Capability Development will be using only acquisition of language /expression meaningfulness, silence & listening)
- Simulated task of sculpting clay for measuring levels of attention at pre (1st session) mid (6th session) and post (13th session) (qualitative comparison)
- ABT Tools: Image cards- connect images and make a story Comparison of Drawings
- Videos /Photos (pre- post)

3.4. Methods Used

a) Case Study 1: Kshitij

No	Date	Therapeutic Domain	Metaphor	Communion
1.	10/9/2018	Levels of attention Narrative	Story	The session started with dance using simple movements

		Capability		
2.	11/9/2018	Levels of attention Narrative Capability	Story	The session started with dance using simple movements
3.	27/9/2018	Levels of attention	Tree	
4.	3/10/2018	Levels of attention	Puppets	Listening to a story with stick puppets Identifying objects and picking it up

Creation

Enacting the stor using props whichwas told to each through book Enacting the stor using props whichwas told to each through book Children were giv blues and differed moulds to create different objects, stick puppet and make a story of t own

No	Date	Therapeutic Domain	Metaphor	Communion
5.	21/11/2018	Levels of attention	Body	The session started with Gayatri mantra and then singing a song: head, shoulders, knees and toes while identifying different parts of the body. Enacting of different tastes, lemon, chips, chocolate etc.
6.	27/11/2018	Levels of attention +66	Bubble wrap	The session started with Meditation And they were asked to Imagine and paint with different body parts with background music. With imitation they were able to do it

Creation

charts of different body parts was gi and they had to identify and stick bindis on it. It seemed difficult s they were asked t identify body part with sketch pens, was also a bit tou for them so then were asked to sti different body par on plain paper. Collage of differe body parts was m on paper Few drops of post colours were pour onto the paper an then bubble wrap spread on to it an they were asked t explore it Using t fingers, hands pal and feet to sprea colour. They mad beautiful art piece

No	Date	Therapeutic Domain	Metaphor	Communion
7.	29/11/2018	Levels of attention	Music	The session started with Om and Gayatri mantra. The facilitator said different names of animals and birds. They had to identify those while making different sounds of animals and birds eg: Duck: Quack-quack
8.	3/12/2018	Levels of attention	Tree	We practiced differed exercises of hands and legs with instrumental music and at the end we formed a tree as a sculpt describing different parts of the tree like branches, leaves, etc.

Creation

Different instrum were given to exp and also tried to piano and differen instrumental musi which they could relate to and sang nursery rhymes w drum beats and H songs Individually each was given a white paper with colour and different clay tools

No	Date	Therapeutic Domain	Metaphor	Communion
9.	11/12/2018	Levels of attention	Dot	The session started with casual chatting, asking what they had for breakfast and what they have in their tiffin today, what are their likes and dislikes
10.	12/12/2018	Levels of	Nursery	The session started with

		attention	rhymes	chanting of “Om” and singing songs while making movements and actions
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Creation

The facilitator had given a violet pap with a round mirr stuck on it and th were asked to ma white dots around with ear-buds. Th facilitator did sho how dots can be made around the mirror making it li Mandala art but t enjoyed strokes a went all over the paper but enjoye process, So I let i The facilitator the slowly moved fro singing songs to playing a drum on same song and th they too joined in exploring the diff instruments and singing songs whi we played music along

No	Date	Therapeutic Domain	Metaphor	Communion
11.	20/12/2018	Levels of attention	Heart	The session started with chanting “om” and then jumping and hoping like different animals along straight lines and zig-zag lines
12.	21/12/2018	Levels of attention	Snowman	The session started with making them feel different kinds of textures with eyes closed rough &smooth while instrumental music played at the background
13.	4/1/2019	Levels of attention	Art: Recognizing and matching of different colors	The session started with listening to instrumental music and they were given different colors of Rangoli to try their hands on

Creation

The facilitator had made heart cut -o for everyone to decorate. They w given colours, ske pens, stickers, be to decorate. They enjoyed decoratin the hearts

The facilitator had cut-outs of snow they had to stick cotton, cap, beak scarf at the right places and make puppet out of I Each one was giv paper with differe coloured leaves a different colors of Rangoli to match stick on it

No	Date	Therapeutic Domain	Metaphor	Communion
14.	8/1/2019	Levels of attention	Tree	We practiced differed exercises of hands and legs with instrumental music and at the end we formed a tree as a sculpt describing differet parts of the tree like branches, leaves, etc.

Creation

Individually each was given a wood board with black and different clay tools

12

b) Case study 2: Nityam

No	Date	Therapeutic Domain	Metaphor	Communion
1.	10/9/2018	Levels of Attention	Story	The session started with dance using simple movements
2.	11/9/2018	Levels of Attention	Story	The session started with dance using simple movements
3.	27/9/2018	Levels of Attention	Tree	We practiced different exercises of hands and legs with instrumental music and at the end we formed a tree as a sculpt describing different parts of the tree like ranches, leaves, etc.

4.	3/10/2018	Levels of Attention	Puppets	Listening to a story with stick puppets Identifying objects and picking it up
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Creation

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No	Date	Therapeutic Domain	Metaphor	Communion
5.	21/11/2018	Levels of Attention	Body	The session started with Gayatri mantra and then singing asong: head,shoulders,knees and toes while identifying different parts of the body.Enacting of different tastes, lemon, chips, chocolate etc.
6.	27/11/2018	Levels of Attention	Bubble wrap	The session started with Meditation And they were asked to Imagine and paint with different body parts with background music. With imitation they were able to do it

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7.	29/11/2018	Levels of Attention	Music	The session started with Om and Gayatri mantra. The facilitator said different names of animals and birds. They had to identify those while making different sounds of animals and birds eg: Duck: Quack-quack
8.	3/12/2018	Levels of Attention	Tree	We practiced differed exercises of hands and legs with instrumental music and at the end we formed a tree as a sculpt describing different parts of the tree like ranches, leaves, etc.

Creation

Different instrum were given to exp and also tried to piano and differen instrumental musi which they could relate to and sang nursery rhymes w drum beats and h songs Individually each was given a white paper with colour and different clay tools.15

No	Date	Therapeutic Domain	Metaphor	Communion
9.	11/12/2018	Levels of Attention	Dot	The session started with casual chatting, asking what they had for breakfast and what they have in their tiffin today, what are their likes and dislikes

10.	12/12/2018	Levels of Attention	Nursery rhymes	The session started with chanting of “Om” and singing songs while making movements and actions
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12.	21/12/2018	Levels of Attention	Snowman	The session started with making them feel different kinds of textures with eyes closed rough &smooth while instrumental music played at the background
13.	4/1/2019	Levels of Attention	Art: Recognizing and matching of different colors	The session started with listening to instrumental music and they were given different colors of Rangoli to try their hands on

Creation

The facilitator had made heart cut -o for everyone to decorate. They w given colours,ske pens,stickers, bea to decorate. They enjoyed decoratin the hearts The facilitator had cut-outs of snow they had to stick

cotton, cap, beak scarf at the right places and make puppet out of it Each one was given paper with different colored leaves and different colors of Rangoli to match and stick on

No	Date	Therapeutic Domain	Metaphor	Communion
14.	8/1/2019	Levels of Attention	Tree	We practiced different exercises of hands and legs with instrumental music and at the end we formed a tree as a sculpture describing different parts of the tree like branches, leaves, etc.

Creation Individually each was given a wood board with black and different clay tools

c) Case Study 3: Karthik

No	Date	Therapeutic Domain	Metaphor	Communion
1.	10/9/2018	Narrative Capability	Story	The session started with dance using simple movements
2.	11/9/2018	Narrative Capability	Story	The session started with dance using simple movements
3.	27/9/2018	Narrative Capability	Tree	We practiced different exercises of hands and legs with instrumental music and at the end we formed a tree as a sculpture describing different parts of the tree like branches, leaves, etc.
4.	3/10/2018	Narrative Capability	Puppets	Listening to a story with stick puppets Identifying objects and

				picking it up
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No	Date	Therapeutic Domain	Metaphor	Communion
5.	21/11/2018	Narrative Capability	Body	The session started with Gayatri mantra and then singing a song: head, shoulders, knees and toes while identifying different parts of the body. Enacting of different tastes, lemon, chips, chocolate etc.
6.	27/11/2018	Narrative Capability	Bubble wrap	The session started with Meditation And they were asked to Imagine and paint with different body parts with background music. With imitation they were able to do it

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No	Date	Therapeutic Domain	Metaphor	Communion
7.	29/11/2018	Narrative Capability	Music	The session started with Om and Gayatri mantra.

				The facilitator said different names of animals and birds. They had to identify those while making different sounds of animals and birds eg: Duck:Quack-quack
8.	3/12/2018	Narrative Capability	Tree	We practiced differed exercises of hands and legs with instrumental music and at the end we formed a tree as a sculpt describing different parts of the tree like ranches, leaves, etc.

Creation

Different instrum were given to exp and also tried to piano and differen instrumental musi which they could relate to and sang nursery rhymes w drum beats and h songs Individually each was given a white paper with colour and different clay tools21

No	Date	Therapeutic Domain	Metaphor	Communion
9.	11/12/2018	Narrative Capability	Dot	The session started with casual chatting, asking what they had for breakfast and what they have in their tiffin today, what are their likes and dislikes
10.	12/12/2018	Narrative Capability	Nursery rhymes	The session started with chanting of “Om” and singing songs while making movements and actions

Creation

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No	Date	Therapeutic Domain	Metaphor	Communion
11.	20/12/2018	Narrative Capability	Heart	The session started with chanting “om” and then jumping and hoping like different animals along straight lines and zig-zag lines
12.	21/12/2018	Narrative Capability	Snowman	The session started with making them feel different kinds of textures with eyes closed rough &smooth while instrumental music played at the background
13.	4/1/2019	Narrative Capability	Art: Recognizing and matching of different colours	The session started with listening to instrumental music and they were given different colours of Rangoli to try their hands on

Creation

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No	Date	Therapeutic Domain	Metaphor	Communion
14.	8/1/2019	Narrative Capability	Tree	We practiced differed exercises of hands and legs with

				instrumental music and at the end we formed a tree as a sculpt describing different parts of the tree like branches, leaves, etc.
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Creation Individually each was given a wood board with black and different clay tools

24

d) Case Study 4: Aarav

No	Date	Therapeutic Domain	Metaphor	Communion
1.	10/9/2018	Narrative Capability	Story	The session started with dance using simple movements
2.	11/9/2018	Narrative Capability	Story	The session started with dance using simple movements
3.	27/9/2018	Narrative Capability	Tree	We practiced different exercises of hands and legs with instrumental music and at the end we formed a tree as a sculpt describing different parts of the tree like ranches, leaves, etc.
4.	3/10/2018	Narrative Capability	Puppets	Listening to a story with stick puppets Identifying objects and picking it up

Creation

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No	Date	Therapeutic Domain	Metaphor	Communion
5.	21/11/2018	Narrative Capability	Body	The session started with Gayatri mantra and then singing asong: head,shoulders,knees and toes while identifying different parts of the body.Enacting of different tastes, lemon, chips, chocolate etc.
6.	27/11/2018	Narrative Capability	Bubble wrap	The session started with Meditation And they were asked to Imagine and paint with different body parts with background music. With imitation they were able to do it

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26

No	Date	Therapeutic Domain	Metaphor	Communion
7.	29/11/2018	Narrative Capability	Music	The session started with Om and Gayatri mantra. The facilitator said different names of animals and birds. They had to identify those

				while making different sounds of animals and birds eg: Duck: Quack-quack
8.	3/12/2018	Narrative Capability	Tree	We practiced differed exercises of hands and legs with instrumental music and at the end we formed a tree as a sculpt describing different parts of the tree like ranches, leaves, etc.

Creation

Different instrum were given to exp and also tried to piano and differen instrumental musi which they could relate to and sang nursery rhymes w drum beats and H songs Individually each was given a white paper with colour and different clay tools²⁷

No	Date	Therapeutic Domain	Metaphor	Communion
9.	11/12/2018	Narrative Capability	Dot	The session started with casual chatting, asking what they had for breakfast and what they have in their tiffin today, what are their likes and dislikes
10.	12/12/2018	Narrative Capability	Nursery rhymes	The session started with chanting of “Om” and singing songs while making movements and actions

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12.	21/12/2018	Narrative Capability	Snowman	The session started with making them feel different kinds of textures with eyes closed rough & smooth while instrumental music played at the background
13.	4/1/2019	Narrative Capability	Art: Recognizing and matching of different colors	The session started with listening to instrumental music and they were given different colors of Rangoli to try their hands on

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14.	8/1/2019	Narrative Capability	Tree	We practiced differed exercises of hands and legs with instrumental music and

				at the end we formed a tree as a sculpt describing differet parts of the tree like branches, leaves, etc.
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Creation

Individually each was given a wood board with black and different clay tools

e) Case Study 5: Atharva

No	Date	Therapeutic Domain	Metaphor	Communion
1.	10/9/2018	Narrative Capability	Story	The session started with dance using simple movements
2.	11/9/2018	Narrative Capability	Story	The session started with dance using simple movements
3.	27/9/2018	Narrative Capability	Tree	We practiced different exercises of hands and legs with instrumental music and at the end we formed a tree as a sculpt describing different parts of the tree like ranches, leaves, etc.
4.	3/10/2018	Narrative Capability	Puppets	Listening to a story with stick puppets Identifying objects and picking it up

Creation

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32

No	Date	Therapeutic Domain	Metaphor	Communion
7.	29/11/2018	Narrative Capability	Music	The session started with Om and Gayatri mantra. The facilitator said different names of animals and birds. They had to identify those while making different

				sounds of animals and birds eg: Duck:Quack-quack
8.	3/12/2018	Narrative Capability	Tree	We practiced differed exercises of hands and legs with instrumental music and at the end we formed a tree as a sculpt describing different parts of the tree like ranches, leaves, etc.

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9.	11/12/2018	Narrative Capability	Dot	The session started with casual chatting, asking what they had for breakfast and what they have in their tiffin today, what are their likes and dislikes
10.	12/12/2018	Narrative Capability	Nursery rhymes	The session started with chanting of “Om” and singing songs while making movements and actions

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14.	8/1/2019	Narrative Capability	Tree	We practiced differed exercises of hands and legs with instrumental music and at the end we formed a

				tree as a sculpt describing different parts of the tree like branches, leaves, etc.
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Creation

Individually each was given a wood board with black and different clay tools

4. Section 4: RESULTS

The journey was coming to an end or was it a beginning of new one let’s find it out. Along were 5 students whose goals were chosen as Attention span for the little ones aged 4-6 and Narrative Capability for ages 7-10 years. With lots of interventions, play-way methods and using arts as a therapy. The scores at the beginning and at the end of journey were compared to show if there was a significant change in the Therapeutic goals set or not. Though there was not much of difference and changes in individual passengers on the goals set, there were lots of learnings, experiences and outcomes which were seen during the entire course of 4 months



“ Jo dil se laage use keh do Hi, hi, hi, jo dil na laage use keh do bye bye.....Love you zindagi”
37

4.1. Results Summar

It is clearly evident from the Pre- post rating scales used, ABT tools, simulated tasks of clay sculpt, Graphs, Tables and from photos and videos that there has been a positive change in the clients in terms of levels of attention and Narrative capability Development in autistic children. It shows a change in levels of attention in terms of initiations of tasks. In Narrative Capability Development (NcD), there has been a satisfactory change in factor related to silence & listening. The qualitative data obtained through simulation of tasks, photos and videos in the pre- post sessions have also shown a positive change in Expressive Capability which is seen on rating scale by WCCL.

In case 1: On T.G 1 i.e levels of Attention, he does show a slight decrease in factor related to Restlessness, increase in tasks related to initiation, but no change in sustained attention.

- In case 2: On T.G 1 i.e levels of Attention He does show a slight increase in factor related to initiation but an increase in restlessness scores and a decrease in sustained attention.
- In case 3, there are no changes in Narrative capability Development. • In case 4, Arts Based therapy

has shown an improvement in Narrative Capability Development in Acquisition on language and expression and meaningfulness in Case 4

- In case 5, there has been slight changes on Narrative capability development on factor related to acquisition of language and also during comparison on simulated tasks and drawings.
- Though my T.G’s were Attention and Narrative Capability, Arts Based therapy has also shown a lots of improvements on other factors in each individual clients which is evident in Graphs and scores obtained.
- In conclusion, we can say “Arts based Therapy has shown an improvement in Attention and Narrative Capability in autistic children.”

38

4.2. Results Detailed

a) Case Study 1

- Name: Kshitij
- Family Background: K.R is 4 years diagnosed with Autism from Sion hospital. He comes from a well to do family where mother is post graduate, father is wee educated and he has an elder brother who is studying in 4th class in normal school
- Academic &Rehab teachers input: He is a pampered child. Initially would not sit in the centre but now is getting accommodated. He likes puzzles, toys and stories.
- Medical Background: Complications at birth and delayed speech and motor development.
- Creation: K.R’S main area of need is Levels of attention: Decrease in distractibility/restlessness, increase in initiation of tasks and improvements in sustained attention and in which the main focus will, increasing levels of attention.
- Results: K.R has underwent Arts Based therapy from September January and has shown no improvement in levels of sustained attention, slight decrease in factor of restlessness/distractibility and an increase in initiating of tasks but no changes in sustained attention. The pre and post results have been -Tested using MARS-Moss attention rating scale. The results for the same are plotted on Graph1a below. In simulated task of clay sculpt, there was a qualitative difference in the 1st and 13th session which has been seen in Picture 1. It is observed that he has a better attention span when activities are related to preschool curriculum like counting, alphabets, rhymes are. The results on pre- post session have been Ref. (Table 1a,1b,1c),Graph 1a and Graph 1b & Picture 1.On standardized rating scale by WCCL, he has also shown positive changes in Attention, Cognitive and Narrative Capability while a decline in Expression through Arts which can be seen in Graph 1b.Thus, we can conclude that Arts Based therapy has shown 39 slight improvement in levels of Attention in terms related to decrease in restlessness and improvement in initiating tasks while no changes in sustained attention in Case 1.

Case Study-1: Comparison of Pre—Post Test on MARS (Moss Attention Rating Scale)

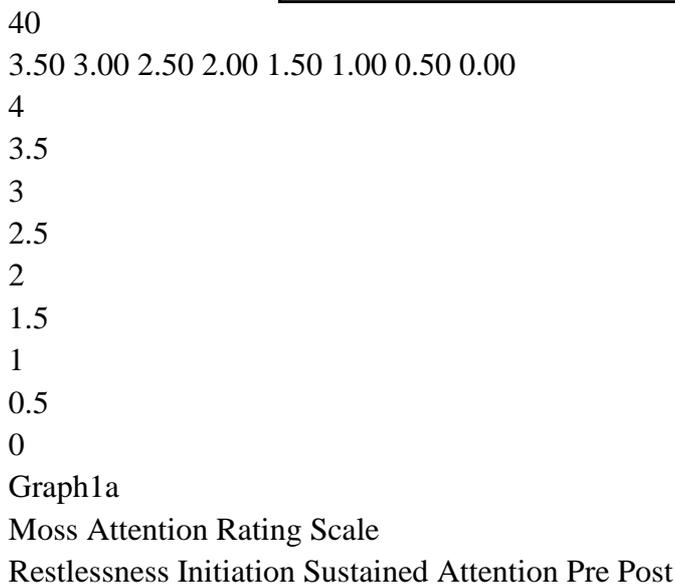
Table 1a (pre-test)

MARS Total Raw Score	52
Average MARS Item	2.36

Score	
Factor 1 (Restlessness/Distractibility) Score	3.00
Factor 2 (Initiation) Score	2.33
Factor 3 (Consistent/Sustained Attention) Score	1.67

Table 1b (Post-test)

MARS Total Raw Score	53
Average MARS Item Score	2.41
Factor 1 (Restlessness/Distractibility) Score	2.80
Factor 2 (Initiation) Score	2.67
Factor 3 (Consistent/Sustained Attention) Score	1.67



Graph1a

Moss Attention Rating Scale

Restlessness Initiation Sustained Attention Pre Post

Graph1b

Pre and Post Comparison on rating scale for Children with Special Needs

Body Attention Cognitive ability

Narrative Capability

Expressive Capability

Group

Interaction

Pre Post

41

Case Study-1: Comparative Study of simulated task: clay sculpt

Table 1c

	Pre 1st session	Mid session 6th	Post session 13th
Understanding of the metaphor	Almost never	rarely	rarely
Initiates task on own	Rarely	Rarely	Rarely
Experiments	Rarely	often	often
Focused attention time	Rarely	Rarely	Rarely
Completes the task	Almost never	Rarely	Rarely
Remains focused despite external noise	Rarely	often	often

Picture 1



42

b) Case study 2

- Name: Nityam
- Family Background: N.J is 5 years old and has been diagnosed with Autism. He is the only child.

His mother’s education is M.com and father is a graduate.

- Academic &Rehab teachersinput: He responds He responds well to music and clings to someone. His fine motor skills are not yet developed
- Medical Background: He has problems with eyesight since 2015 and has been operated for the same.
- Creation: N.J’S main area of need is Levels of attention: Decrease in distractibility/restlessness, increase in initiation of tasks and improvements in sustained attention and in which the main focus increasing levels of attention.
- Results N.J has underwent Arts Based therapy from September January and has shown no improvement in levels of attention, slight increase in factor related to restlessness/distractibility and an increase in initiating of tasks while a decrease in sustained attention. The pre and post results have been -Tested using MARS-Moss attention rating scale. The results for the same are plotted shown in Table 2a,2b and on the Graph 2a below. In ABT tool on simulated task of clay sculpt, there was a qualitative difference in the 1st and 13th session which has been seen in Picture 2. It is observed that he has a better attention span when activities are related to music/The results on pre-post session have been Ref. (Table 2a,2b,2c) Graph 2a ,2b & Picture 2. On standardized rating scale by WCCL, he has also shown slightly positive changes on all factors. which can be seen in Graph 2b. Thus, we can conclude that Arts Based therapy has shown slight improvement in levels of Attention in terms related

43

to initiating tasks while a negative change in restlessness and sustained attention in Case 2.

Case Study-2: Comparison of Pre—Post Test on MARS (Moss Attention Rating Scale)

Table 2a (Pre-Test)

MARS Total Raw Score	70
Average MARS Item Score	3.18
Factor 1 (Restlessness/Distractibility) Score	3.20
Factor 2 (Initiation) Score	3.67
Factor 3 (Consistent/Sustained Attention) Score	2.67

Table 2b(Post-Test)

MARS Total Raw Score	83
Average MARS Item Score	3.77
Factor 1 (Restlessness/Distractibility) Score	3.40
Factor 2 (Initiation) Score	4.33
Factor 3 (Consistent/Sustained Attention) Score	2.33

44

Graph 2a

Moss Attention Rating Scale

5.00

4.50

4.00

3.50

3.00

Pre

2.50

Post

2.00

1.50

1.00

0.50

0.00

Restlessness Initiation Sustained Attention

Graph 2b

Pre and Post Comparison on rating scale for Children with Special Needs

3.5

3

2.5

2

1.5

1

0.5

0

Body Attention Cognitive ability

Narrative Capability

Expressive Capability

Group

Interaction

Pre Post

45

Case Study-2: Comparative Study on simulation task

Table 2c

	Pre 1st session	Mid-session 6th	Post session 13th
Understanding the Metaphor	Rarely	Rarely	Rarely
Initiates task on own	Rarely	Rarely	Rarely
Experiments	Often	Often	Often
Focused attention time	Frequently	Frequently	Almost always
Completes the task	Almost always	Almost always	Almost always
Remains focused despite external noise	Almost always	Almost always	Almost always

Picture 2



46

c) Case Study 3

- Name: Karthik
- Family Background: K.K is 7 years old and has been diagnosed with moderate Autism. Mother is 10th passed, Father is 12th passed. He comes from a lower middle-class family and is the only child. He attends regular school too.
- Academic & Rehab Teachers Input: He was speaking till 2 years and then suddenly stopped speaking but now at times speaks one or two words and also shows through gestures, points and can read/ write a little
- Medical Background: No major illness.
- Creation: K.K's main area of need is Narrative capability wherein the focus is mainly on acquisition of language; expression and meaningfulness; & silence and listening.
- Results: K.K has underwent Arts Based therapy from September January and has shown no improvement in levels of Narrative Capability. He has only shown a change on the factor of listening and responding appropriately at times. The pre and post results have been shown on NcD. Ref. Table 3a, 3b In ABT tool on simulated task of clay sculpt, there was a slight qualitative difference in the 1st and 13th session which has been seen Table 3c & Picture 3. On standardized test by WCCL, he has shown improvements on Attention and Expressive Capability. (Ref. Graph 3a) Thus, we can conclude, Arts Based therapy has shown slight improvements in Narrative capability in terms of appropriate silence & listening in Case 3

47

Case Study-3: Narrative Capability Development (Pre-Test)

Table 3a

Acquisition of language	Yes	No
Vocalization with intonation	To some extend	
Basic vocabulary	√	
Simple sentences understood		Sometimes
Understanding of simple questions		√
Sound reasoning		√
Fluent speech		√
Expression and meaningfulness		
In context		√
Personally meaningful		√

Meaningful to others		√
Spontaneous but expressive		√
Thoughtful but expressive		√
Consciously symbolic		√
Silence & listening		
Silent when talked to		√
Listens and understands but no appropriate response	√	
Appropriate silence		√
Reflectively silent		√
Deep listening		√
Meaningful listening and relevant response		√

Case Study-3: Narrative Capability Development (Post-Test) •

Table 3b

Acquisition of language	Yes	No
Vocalization with intonation	To some extend	
Basic vocabulary	√	
Simple sentences understood		Sometimes
Understanding of simple questions		Sometimes
Sound reasoning		√
Fluent speech		√
Expression and meaningfulness		
In context		√
Personally meaningful		√
Meaningful to others		√
Spontaneous but expressive		At times

Thoughtful but expressive		√
Consciously symbolic		√
Silence & listening		
Silent when talked to		√
Listens and understands but no appropriate response		√
Appropriate silence		√
Reflectively silent		√
Deep listening		Sometimes
Meaningful listening and relevant response		√

Graph 3a

Pre and Post Comparison on rating scale for Children with Special Needs

4
3.5
3
2.5
2
1.5
1
0.5
0
Body Attention Cognitive ability
Narrative Capability
Expressive Capability
Group
Interaction
Pre Post
50

Case Study-3: Comparative Study

Table 3c

	Pre 1st session	Mid-session 6th	Post session 13th
Understanding the Metaphor	Rarely	Rarely	Rarely

initiates task on own	Rarely	Often	Often
Experiments	Rarely	often	Often
Focused attention time	Rarely	Rarely	Rarely
Completes the task	Often	often	Often
Remains focused despite external noise	Rarely	Rarely	Rarely

Picture 3



d) Case study 4

- Name: Aarav
- Family Background: A.P is 9 years and has been diagnosed with Autism. His parents are graduate and both are working. He stays with his grandparents and his grandfather is a little strict and emphasis on discipline and orderliness. Before A.P was born they had a son who died due to some accident (details are not available)
- Academic &Rehab teachers input:
- A.P doesn't like to work with crayons but he likes to use other medium mainly painting is his

favorite. He doesn't participate in other activities and sits with his ears closed

- **Medical Background:** Birth cry was not present at birth
- **Creation:** A.P's main area of need is Narrative capability where the main focus would be basic vocabulary, understanding of simple questions and responding appropriately to instructions.
- **Results:** A.P has underwent Arts Based therapy from September January and has shown a slight improvement Narrative Capability Development, he has shown slight improvement in basic vocabulary, expression and meaningfulness, and a slight improvement in silence and listening. The pre and post results have been shown on NcD in Table 4a and 4b. In ABT tool on simulated task of clay sculpt, there was a qualitative difference in the 1st and 13th session which has been seen in 4c and Picture 4. On standardized rating scale by WCCL, he has shown an inclination on Narrative Capability and Expression through Arts which can be seen in Graph 4a. Thus, we can conclude that Arts Based therapy has shown an improvement in Narrative Capability Development in Acquisition on language and expression and meaningfulness in Case 4

53

Case Study-4: Narrative Capability Development (Pre-Test)

Table 4a

Acquisition of language	Yes	No
Vocalization with intonation		√
Basic vocabulary	√	
Simple sentences understood		√
Understanding of simple questions		√
Sound reasoning		√
Fluent speech		√
Expression and meaningfulness		
In context		At times
Personally meaningful		√
Meaningful to others		√
Spontaneous but expressive		At times
Thoughtful but expressive		√

Consciously symbolic		√
Silence & listening		
Silent when talked to	√	
Listens and understands but no appropriate response	√	
Appropriate silence		√
Reflectively silent		√
Deep listening		√
Meaningful listening and relevant response		√

Case Study-4: Narrative Capability Development (Post-Test)

Table 4b

Acquisition of language	Yes	No
Vocalization with intonation		√
Basic vocabulary	√	
Simple sentences understood		√
Understanding of simple questions		√
Sound reasoning		√
Fluent speech		√
Expression and meaningfulness		
In context		At times
Personally meaningful		√
Meaningful to others		√

Spontaneous but expressive		At times
Thoughtful but expressive	√	
Consciously symbolic	√	
Silence & listening		
Silent when talked to	√	
Listens and understands but no appropriate response		√
Appropriate silence		√
Reflectively silent	√	
Deep listening	At times	
Meaningful listening and relevant response	At times	

I saw a lot of difference in Aarav. Aarav loves art activities. i.e Drawing, painting clay and after few sessions he was willing to do activities with me...Initially if he was told to do he used to start and stop when told to but now if he likes the activity and wants to do more he says so though it is non verbal form but he asks for it and also has started responding to instructions.

55

Graph 4a

Pre and Post Comparison on rating scale for Children with Special Needs

5
4
3
2
1
0

Body Attention Cognitive ability

Narrative Capability

Expressive Capability

Group

Interaction

Pre Post

56

Case Study-4: Comparative Study

Table 4c

	Pre 1st session	Mid-session 6th	Post session 13th
Understanding the Metaphor	Rarely	often	Often
Initiates task on own	Rarely	Frequently	Frequently
Experiments	often	Frequently	Frequently
Focused attention time	Frequently	Almost always	Almost always
Completes the task	Almost always	Almost always	Almost always
Remains focused despite external noise	Frequently	Almost always	Almost always

• *Picture 4*

e) Case study 5

- **Name:** Atharva
- **Family Background:** A.J is 10 years old and from a well to do family wherein both parents are graduates. Father is working mother is housewife. He shows moderate signs of autism
- **Academic & Rehab teachers input:** He has been recently admitted in the centre so not much is known about him
- **Medical Background:** He was born premature at 33 weeks, birth cry was not present. He was kept in NICU for 15 days. Even after discharge he had neonatal jaundice and was admitted again for 7 days. He also has a history of seizures and seizures were present till 8 years of age
- **Creation:** For A.J the main area of need is Narrative capability and attention wherein the focus would be basic vocabulary and simple sentences and increasing the time of focus.
- **Results:** A.J has underwent Arts Based therapy from September January and has shown a slight improvement Narrative Capability Development, he has shown slight improvement in acquisition of language, while expression and meaningfulness, and silence and listening did not show a change. The pre and post results have been shown on NcD in 5a and 5b. In ABT tool on simulated task of clay sculpt, there was a qualitative difference in the 1st and 13th session which has been seen in Picture 5. On standardized rating scale by WCCL, he has shown an inclined trait on Body, Attention and Expression through Arts which can be seen in Graph 5a. Thus, we can conclude that Arts Based therapy has an improvement in Narrative Capability Development in acquisition of language in Case 5.

Case Study-5: Narrative Capability (Pre-Test) Table 5a

Acquisition of language	Yes	No
Vocalization with intonation	√	
Basic vocabulary	√	
Simple sentences understood	√	
Understanding of simple questions	√	
Sound reasoning		√
Fluent speech	To some extend	
Expression and meaningfulness		
In context		Sometimes
Personally meaningful		√
Meaningful to others		√
Spontaneous but expressive		√
Thoughtful but expressive		√
Consciously symbolic		√
Silence & listening		
Silent when talked to		√
Listens and understands but no appropriate response	√	
Appropriate silence		√
Reflectively silent		√
Deep listening		√
Meaningful listening and relevant response		√

Case Study-5: Narrative Capability (Post-Test)

Table 5b

Acquisition of language	Yes	No
Vocalization with intonation	To some extend	
Basic vocabulary	√	
Simple sentences understood		Sometimes
Understanding of simple questions	√	
Sound reasoning		√
Fluent speech	To some extend	
Expression and meaningfulness		
In context		√
Personally meaningful		√
Meaningful to others		√
Spontaneous but expressive		√
Thoughtful but expressive		√
Consciously symbolic		√
Silence & listening		
Silent when talked to		√
Listens and understands but no appropriate response		√
Appropriate silence		√

Reflectively silent		√
Deep listening		√
Meaningful listening and relevant response	At times	

Graph 5a

Pre and Post Comparison on rating scale for Children with Special Needs

3.5
3
2.5
2
1.5
1
0.5
0

Body Attention Cognitive ability
Narrative Capability
Expressive Capability
Group
Interaction
Pre Post

“The only thing that is ultimately real about your journey is the step that you are taking at this moment. That’s all there ever is”

- Eckhart Tolle
61

Case Study-5: Comparative Study

Table 5c

	Pre 1st session	Mid session 6th	Post session 13th
Understanding the metaphor	Rarely	Rarely	Rarely
initiates task on own	Rarely	Rarely	Rarely
Experiments	Rarely	Often	Often

Focused attention time	Rarely	Often	Often
Completes the task	Often	Almost always	Almost always
Remains focused despite external noise	Often	Frequently	Frequently

Picture 4

5. Section 5: DISCUSSION

The Odyssey: Our journey of events was coming to an end with lots of learnings, experiences to share and though the passengers of this journey did not reach the destination planned but they surely showed positive changes in various aspects like learning, initiating of tasks, expressing, learning to listen patiently, using non-verbal communication to express and use of different avenues of Art Based therapy. There were obviously obstacles, cliffs and potholes but we all succeeded in achieving it in our own ways. The slight positive change is surely motivating for another long and exciting journey.

5.1 Limitations

Arts Based Therapy has shown slight changes in initiating tasks on levels of attention and Listening in Narrative Capability Development. They have shown improvements in expressing themselves non-verbally to some extent through visual art, Music and expressive arts. For measuring, Levels of attention Moss Attention Span Rating Scale (MARS) was used to compare the pre and post -Test results. Narrative Capability Development by WCCL for measuring factors acquisition of language; expression and meaningfulness; silence & listening. It is difficult to say that the result outcomes are solely due to only Arts Based therapy, as the clients were exposed to many other therapies during the Action research project like Speech, Occupational therapy, remedial teaching at the centre and also medications. Second most factor affecting the results is the duration of the research is very short i.e of 4 months to state whether Arts Based therapy can significantly improve levels of Attention and improve Narrative Capability development in autistic children. The results have not shown any differences in acquisition of language on NcD. Thirdly, use of image cards as an ABT tool with autistic children is limited. They were only able to identify or pick up the card which surely is an improvement but desirable changes cannot be seen. On simulation tasks the qualitative

63

results will strengthen if quantitative results are added to the results. To see the changes and effects of ABT it may require intensive therapy sessions. Fourthly, the attention span and Narrative capability Development were measured only in individual settings where there is less scope for distraction, initiation and less sustained attention. It further needs to be measured in group as well as individual settings. To strengthen the results, of the research or to find out Effects of Arts Based therapy and its impact on Autistic children, it needs to be compared with a controlled group too.

5.2 Learnings

Arts Based Therapy is a beautiful tool to work with Autistic children. It is a medium for them to communicate, express, heal, develop social skills and also learn. It bridges the gap of communication.

Every autistic child was able to relate to some form of art and that helped me build rapport, plan the sessions accordingly and develop their trust in me. Arts Based therapy has helped in transforming individuals, overcoming their inhibitions and also, they have also tried to experiment and explore things differently. Though it is not verbally expressed it is evident through their creations that there has been an improvement and still a scope to improve. The art patterns and their creations are documented through photos and videos which I have documented in this research at the end. Arts Based therapy would have been more effective, if it was combined with social skills program and also if more expressive arts sessions like drama, theatre were included, it will surely tend to show positive outcomes.

5.3 Future

Arts Based therapy will tend to show positive outcomes in Autistic children if intended for a longer duration and also if caregivers, teachers and parents are given basic training regarding the same so that they know what to expect and can have similar goals. It will also help Autistic children build their own identity, self-esteem, develop social skills and

64

decrease in behavioural issues if any. There can be set guidelines for delivering Arts Based therapy to children having ASD like having the same routine, explaining instructions in a consistent manner, not using over stimulating art material. It can be also assessed with a goal of expressing through Arts in autistic children using standardized methods which is one of the goal observed through assessment, it will also serve as a basis for further studies and for new Arts based practitioners.

Arts Based Therapy can also be combined with remedial teaching which will help to achieve goals in a different way and making it more interesting, and enjoyable rather than sticking to the same ABC's of remediation.

“Do every act of your life as though it were the last act of your life.” - Marcus Aurelius

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